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SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, S/CT, SCA/PAB, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR KIMMITT
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, AND POLAD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/KUNDUZ: NEW GOVERNOR DETERMINED TO IMPROVE
PROVINCE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The new Governor of Baghlan Province Mohammed Alam Ishaqzai arrived from his position as Deputy Governor in Nangarhar with an excellent reputation. He is determined to bring more development and greater security to his new province. Ishaqzai is planning to engage the Pul-e Khumri PRT, UNAMA, and other international organizations to assist in the effort to increase development assistance and improve the lives of locals. He believes better coordination in the provincial leadership is key to resolving security issues, but he may find it difficult to control a newly-appointed and reputedly corrupt Chief of Police. END SUMMARY.

President Asked New Governor To Assume Post

¶2. (SBU) PRTOff met with newly-appointed Baghlan Provincial Governor Mohammed Alam Ishaqzai on February 1, the day after he officially took office. Ishaqzai reported that he was first asked to become Governor of Farah Province, then of Paktia, but he declined both times. When President Karzai himself then called and asked him to serve in Baghlan, he felt he could not refuse.

New Governor Focused on Development...

¶3. (SBU) The new Governor is a Pashtun from Nangarhar who has had little previous contact with Baghlan. Ishaqzai told Poloff that he felt very welcome, however, noting that during the drive from Kabul to the provincial capital of Pul-e Khumri the road was lined with thousands of well-wishers, especially Ismaili people (a Shia ethnic group that is primarily but not exclusively Hazara, and has a substantial population in Baghlan). Ishaqzai said he found the residents of Baghlan to be "well-educated and good people." He continued that he quickly realized there had not been enough construction and other development in this central and "pivotal" province. Ishaqzai noted that the roads (other

than the paved ring road to the capital) were bad, and there was not nearly enough infrastructure. Expressing appreciation for the excellent cooperation he had experienced with the PRT in Nangarhar, he voiced his expectation that the international community, the PRT and USAID would cooperate in the same way here in Baghlan to increase development assistance and improve local quality of life. Ishaqzai also indicated his intention to travel to Kunduz in the near future to see UNAMA representatives to discuss how to increase development activity in Baghlan.

... Says Provincial Authorities Need to Cooperate Better

14. (SBU) Although he had only been there briefly, Ishaqzai commented that he did not believe the people of Baghlan opposed the government per se; rather, some individuals and groups were using the general dissatisfaction with the performance of officials to encourage opposition activities. The main problem, in his opinion, was the lack of coordination among provincial authorities: the police, the line ministries representatives, the national directorate of security (NDS), and the previous governor did not appear to cooperate, and thus had not been able to solve issues. Ishaqzai said his intention was to make sure all the provincial authorities worked together. With increased assistance from the international community, he expressed confidence that they could resolve most of the serious security issues in this fractious province.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) PRTOff previously worked with Ishaqzai in Jalalabad

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where he had served as Deputy Governor and Finance Director prior to becoming governor. Ishaqzai comes to Baghlan with an impeccable reputation as an honest official who works hard for the benefit of ordinary people, and there is little doubt that he plans to continue this quality of work as Governor of Baghlan. Unfortunately, PRTOff has heard that new Chief of Police Abdul Rahman Sayed Khail (previously CoP in Parwan), who was sworn in the same day as the Governor, is a "very, very bad guy" who is fully involved in the drug trade and weapons smuggling. In addition, the development community has not focused a great deal of attention on Baghlan, and the Hungarian PRT, as well as the newly-arrived USAID representative, have limited funds and capabilities to respond to Ishaqzai's desire to increase development activities in the province. These circumstances will present challenges to the new Governor's ambitious development agenda, but we will work with him to help identify and make use of opportunities. END COMMENT.

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